

We Should Not Join The WCC

Dr. Philip Potter, who has been connected with the World Council of Churches (WCC) since 1967, first as director of the Commission on World Missions and Evangelism and later as general secretary, has penned his thoughts on the basis and purpose of today's ecumenicity in a booklet entitled *Life In All Its Fullness*. It is a release that gives us all the more reason to question the views of the WCC.

Dr. Potter thinks of himself as a Christian radical called to champion movements for racial and economic justice. Salvation is for the world rather than from the world. Christ is the Liberator, the man for others. Salvation is described in political terms.

Conversion is "doing justice, practicing kindness, living with integrity, avoiding alliances with unjust states and peoples." The Book of Revelation gives us a vision of the city of God - "God's political future." The WCC is in solidarity with the oppressed and seeks "to make them aware of their condition in a new way and to participate in their own liberation in justice and community."

Knowing the Lord is more than a spiritual exercise. It is knowing God through relating to others. "Knowing the Lord means practicing justice and righteousness, upholding the cause of the poor and the oppressed, maintaining the integrity of God's purpose of good. It is the blessing in this cursed existence of ours in a divided, unjust world."

The WCC is not just concerned with the unity of Christian denominations. It desires to embrace the whole human race. "To be in Christ, to confess this one Lord, is to participate in his work of uniting all peoples and all things into him. The unity of the church which is his body is the sign and sacrament of the unity of humanity into the fullness of the stature of Christ. The unity of the church is thus not an ecclesiastically domestic affair. It concerns the whole human race."

World's Ills

Dr. Potter flays the Western world for the ills throughout the world. Economic imperialism is at the root of racism. Investments through corporations, banks, and others "have reinforced the whole racist system, leaving the people no alternative but to struggle for their own liberation". China's economic policy and promotion of "participatory self-reliance" is praised.

South Africa receives, of course, abundant criticism. Latin American nations which accept Western capital for economic growth don't fare much better than South Africa. Asian, Black, Feminist and Liberation theologies are commended. The Western Church has been the main culprit in violating human rights. We are to live down our "appalling history."

The WCC has as its task, therefore, to call for a new economic order. "We cannot speak about human rights without speaking of the effects of transnational corporations,

militarism and the arms race, racism, sexism, and the search for a new international economic order."

As I read this book I asked myself the question: "Whether I am supposed to feel a real sense of self-reproach for my Dutch-Canadian-Western heritage?" When I was in the Philippines, I was asked by Westerners, "Don't you feel guilty about the Western colonial past?" I don't feel guilty. It all happened before my time. I cannot participate in the self-condemnation and guilt campaign of Western liberal theologians.

The Western world has sinned. It has a colonial past with its evils and exploitations, but also its good points. I am not an apologist for either capitalism or socialism, but I share Michael Novak's observation that "capitalism works better than its circumspect ideology; socialism far worse than its romantic hopes."

In the underdeveloped Third World corruption is rampant and nationalism and anti-Western feelings have brought unemployment and often political chaos. Racism is not just an issue between the white and the coloured races. The slave trade in Africa was in the hands of Arabs and negro kings long before white men became involved in this barbaric and inhumane trade.

The WCCs crusade against capitalism stems from the view that evil originates in systems. This is more a Marxist than a Christian concept. However, the root of evil is still within the heart of man. The kingdom cannot be brought about by structural changes in the situation in which we find ourselves. We must practice justice and work for a more humane world, while waiting with eager expectation for the new heaven and earth that will come when Jesus returns.

Dr. Potter's book should convince evangelical-Reformed Christians that they should not participate in the WCC. Its leadership embraces a theology that we cannot support.

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